LAND MANAGEMENT

Ensuring the vitality of Washington's resources

State lands were established as perpetual trusts when Washington became a state in 1889, and these trust lands still support Washington's public schools, universities, and other key institutions. As steward of this legacy, DNR works to ensure the ongoing vitality of our state's trust lands, managing resources sustainably so they continue to yield benefits for the people of Washington now and in the future.

Preserving Natural Areas

Kennedy Creek Natural Area Preserve (NAP) protects three intertidal salt marsh ecosystems that are key habitat for shorebirds and important salmon runs. In May, DNR published a comprehensive management plan for this NAP. Under its guidance, construction of a viewing and interpretive site should be completed here in 2007.

DNR develops management plans for all 51 NAPs under its stewardship. Plans focus on the ecological features of each site and, with input from the public and other agencies, analyze goals and options for environmental protection, as well as opportunities for educational or other types of access.

LUIS PRADO / DNR

2006 PERFORMANCE MEASURE

- **Met 100% of the requirements of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® certification at the 2006 annual review.**

UPLAND TRUST LANDS

Implementing Sustainable Forest Management

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE®

In September 2006, all forested trust lands managed by DNR achieved "green" certification under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) Program. This certification is widely accepted by retailers and home builders who favor wood products from sustainably managed forests. An independent third party audit and review conferred SFI® Program certification for trust lands in eastern Washington, and re-certified those in western Washington, originally certified in 2005.

The auditors recognized as exemplary nine DNR sustainable management practices that exceeded SFI® Program requirements. Among the practices they commended was the publication of the Washington Natural Heritage Plan, which they acknowledged as "an excellent commitment to wildlife management, conservation of biological diversity, and cooperation between many partners."

FOREST LAND PLANNING

Forest land planning was initiated in western Washington, beginning with the South Puget Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) planning unit, and proceeding to the Olympic Experimental State Forest and the Columbia HCP planning units. Guided by the Policy for Sustainable Forests, the sustainable harvest calculation, and the 1997 Habitat Conservation Plan, this process helps DNR develop management strategies to guide on-the-ground activities within individual planning units. Input from public agencies, tribes, organizations, and individuals continues to be a critical part of the process, allowing DNR to address issues affecting each unique area and advance the goals of sustainable forestry.

POLICY FOR SUSTAINABLE FORESTS

In July, the state Board of Natural Resources approved the Policy for Sustainable Forests, replacing the 1992 Forest Resource Plan and furnishing the integrated management guidance needed to support healthy forest ecosystems and provide economic and social benefits. Adoption of the policy followed the settlement of a legal challenge to the ten-year sustainable harvest calculation for state trust lands. The settlement agreement satisfied the concerns of all parties, and allows DNR to put the sustainable harvest calculation into effect in western Washington.

Implementation of the Policy for Sustainable Forests helps DNR meet the commitments of the Habitat Conservation Plan. The Policy reflects DNR's dedication to collaborative, holistic management practices, and ensures conservation of old growth forests and habitat for wildlife, as well as development of fire- and disease-resistant forest stands and the sustainable cultivation of benefits for the trusts and the people of Washington.

DNR is collecting data necessary for defining old growth in eastern Washington, and expects to complete this work by December, 2007.

OUR MISSION

▶ To provide forward-looking stewardship of our state lands, natural resources, and environment. To provide leadership in creating a sustainable future for the Trusts and all citizens.

Inset: The Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) is among the many species of shorebirds that winter at Totten Inlet in Kennedy Creek Natural Area Preserve.

KENNEDY CREEK IMAGE: JANET PEARCE / DNR. BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER: © 2004 JOYCE GROSS

Developing Effective Partnerships

LUIS PRADO / DNR

TIETON FOREST COLLABORATIVE

In May, DNR signed an agreement with The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to enhance management of the forest and shrub-steppe lands in Tieton River Canyon in south-central Washington. The four formed the Tieton Forest Collaborative, a partnership that allows for better stewardship of the landscape as a whole by facilitating cooperation and coordinated management across ownership boundaries. DNR and its partners identified several shared goals, including restoration of the natural plant communities in the area and control of invasive weeds, management of public recreation, and recovery of animals listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act. Covering nearly 200,000 publicly-owned acres, the Collaborative is the largest of its kind in eastern Washington, and provides a unique opportunity to gain and share knowledge about dry-site forest and shrub-steppe restoration.

FUTURE OF WASHINGTON'S FORESTS

The 2005 Legislature appropriated funding for DNR to contract with the University of Washington's College of Forest Resources to study the state's timber supply, its competitive position in regional and global markets, the economic contribution of forestry in the state, and the conversion of forest land to development. The research capabilities of the university provide the foundation for a well-informed policy dialogue on important natural resource, economic development, and land use issues.

Preliminary findings were presented to an October 2006 gathering of about 60 people who discussed ramifications and potential policy responses. At a November forum, more than 80 participants discussed the policy implications and developed legislative recommendations. One finding emphasized that the stable timber supply from state trust lands, 15 percent of the state total, is essential to many of the state's modern saw mills, which then provide a market for timber from private lands. DNR is preparing a summary report of the findings and recommendations for the 2007 Legislature. The final study reports are due June 30, 2007.

NEW DNR COMPOUND

May 25 was the grand opening of the State Light Industrial Park in Tumwater, a new facility shared by DNR and the Department of Corrections, Correctional Industries. The 37-acre site contains DNR's warehouse and fire cache, fabrication and maintenance facility, and related offices. Correctional Industries has a warehouse, offices, and product display area. The joint construction project provided both partners with much-needed facilities, while saving millions of dollars in construction costs. The shared common areas also promote management efficiency.

From vineyards to windmills, state trust lands provide a variety of economic opportunities, serving local communities and trust beneficiaries alike.

2006 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- **Implemented invasive weed control in 37 Natural Areas, thus exceeding by 42% the goal set for 2006.**
- **Exceeded the timber sale revenue target by $5 million, for a total of $208 million for schools, universities, counties, and other public institutions.**

BOB WINSLOW / DNR

Cultivating Varied and Effective Programs

A MEASURED APPROACH TO WIND ENERGY

There has been a national focus on the need for alternative energy, with particular interest in the clean aspects of wind energy. Over the past several years, DNR has responded to this new market, taking a measured approach and working with energy agencies, industry, and others to develop a program to lease state trust lands in key corridors for wind power.

Leases have been let in four counties primarily along the Columbia River and the eastern slopes of Cascade Mountain passes. Nine parcels of state trust lands have been leased, with several installations now in place and generating both energy for the public and revenue for the school trust. As with most other leases, the state receives an annual base lease amount plus a percentage of the income.

▼ **Wind Power**

One of 34 towers built on leased trust land as part of the Wildhorse Windpower project. The project will generate income for the Common School trust and contribute to the Kittitas County tax base.

OIL AND GAS LEASING

The department continued to market vigorously the oil and gas potential of state trust lands. DNR geologists developed a comprehensive website and traveled throughout the western states giving presentations on the geologic conditions favorable for gas accumulations in Washington. The department also restructured its leasing document to appeal to a broader range of exploration companies and encourage increased annual lease rentals.

DNR's November 2005 and June 2006 auctions brought unparalleled results. More than $3 million in trust revenue was realized, with a record bid of $270 per acre for a single tract. Annual leased land rentals will net an additional $3 million if the leases are held for the full six-year term.

Two exploration wells currently being drilled on private land are located close enough to state leases to have a positive impact on future lease auctions.

WINERY & VINEYARD DEVELOPMENT

Development of the first trust parcels in winery and vineyard production in the Red Mountain American Viticultural Area (AVA) moved briskly in 2006. Vineyards were planted on four parcels, four winery sites were cleared and ready for construction, an additional water well was drilled, power utilities were installed, and a major road was constructed on one section of the AVA.

Three trust parcels overlooking the Columbia River in the newly established Horse Heaven Hills AVA brought 1,143 acres of land under lease. The lease involves a new wine grape vineyard, and an organic orchard that will bring a constant stream of revenue to the Common School trust.

Working with the Community

HANDS-ON SCIENCE IN NATURAL AREAS

Lands managed by DNR, especially natural areas established to protect Washington's remarkable landscapes, provide opportunities for education and research. The **Pinecroft Natural Area Preserve** (NAP) near Spokane is a rare example of the ponderosa pine/grassland ecosystem once common in the Spokane Valley. Here, students from North Central High School, under the guidance of science teacher Brent Osborn, conduct research on a variety of topics, ranging from analysis of fire danger and fuel loading to assessments of bacteria in the soil. Their work requires hands-on study, beginning with an introduction to Pinecroft by scientists from DNR, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Eastern Washington University, and the County Noxious Weed Board. DNR provides further support by assisting in the development of research questions and methods, refinement of those methods in the field, and field data collection. The students' research projects are presented at the North Central Science Symposium and published in a science journal. This innovative science program entered its fifth year in 2006. The science journal, for which DNR scientists serve as editorial advisors, is in its third year.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Among the accomplishments of the volunteer program this year was a project in Capitol State Forest hosted by DNR's Pacific Crest District. Funded by DNR and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, the project employed a pack-animal work party to complete critical maintenance on a section of trail that cannot be accessed by motor vehicles. Volunteers, including members of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington, along with 18 stock animals, spent a cool day in March hauling about 18,000 pounds of gravel up the trail. The project successfully addressed a trail maintenance challenge, while further developing beneficial partnerships between DNR and those who enjoy recreation on state trust lands.

Working with educators, volunteers, and other agencies, DNR provides hands-on education and develops safe, sustainable public access on Washington's state lands.

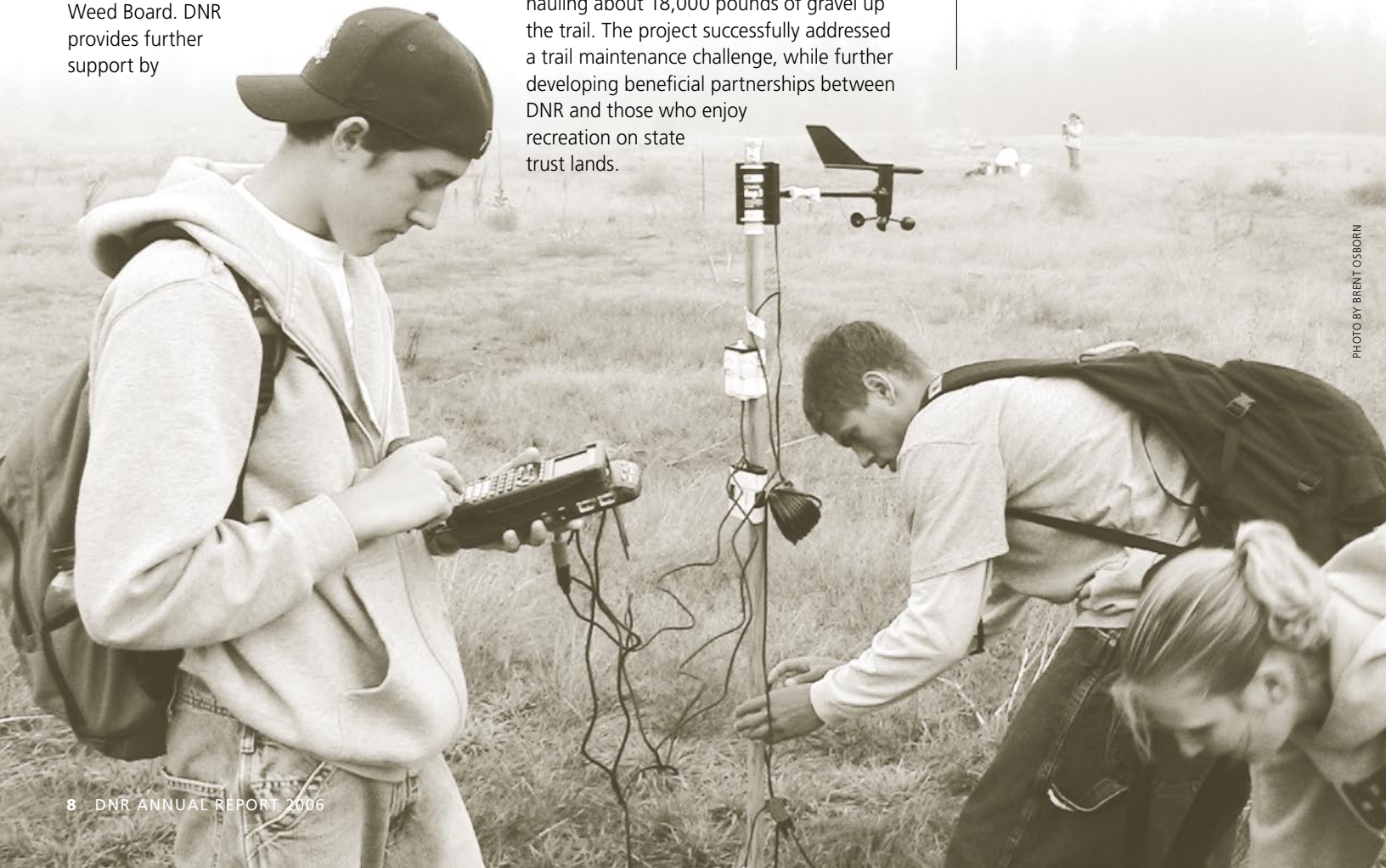


PHOTO BY BRENT OSBORN

JANET PEARCE / DNR

PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

DNR participates in a variety of hands-on environmental education programs statewide, such as internationally recognized Students in the Watershed. Now in its 11th year, this program is the result of a partnership including DNR, North Mason School District, state agencies, and the local community. DNR scientists mentor high school students learning about the Tahuya State Forest on the Kitsap Peninsula. The students provide monitoring and valuable research, becoming educators in their turn when, in the spring, they teach hundreds of fourth-graders about watersheds, stewardship, forest ecology, and forestry.

Project Black Bear, meanwhile, teaches high school students about the complexity of resource management in an urban-interface forest. Students assist DNR with research on bear damage in Capitol State Forest near Olympia by helping with bear damage plot studies, investigating damage control methods, and communicating results to the community.

In Thurston County, Project Bluebird partners Littlerock Elementary School students with Black Hills High School students to build bluebird boxes using wood donated by the Cedar Creek Corrections Facility. Students mount, monitor, and maintain the boxes, often in Natural Area Preserves managed by DNR. Pre-veterinarian students at New Market Vocational Skills Center analyze the nests and their contents (see photo above).

Adapting to Change

SAFE, SUSTAINABLE ACCESS

In 2006, DNR laid the groundwork for a comprehensive recreational access plan for state trust lands. The goal is to provide the public with dependable access to recreational opportunities, while ensuring that all uses are sustainable and compatible with the financial and environmental obligations of the trust. An important step was the completion of a survey of 74 state-owned landscapes actively used by the public. On 85 percent of the surveyed landscapes, public use is neither funded nor managed to ensure compatibility with trust objectives, environmental protection, public safety, or quality of experience for users. To address this problem and

ROSI FRY / DNR

meet commitments set by the Policy for Sustainable Forests, Multiple Use Act, and Habitat Conservation Plan, DNR will request legislative support in 2007 to implement a 10-year management strategy, and will continue to seek support and cooperation among user groups and local governments to balance the needs of the land, of the trust, and of the users.

TRUST LAND TRANSACTIONS

Washington's original granted trust lands were widely scattered, varied in productivity, and dominated by forestland. DNR repositions trust lands to enhance their value and income potential, diversify holdings, and improve long-term management options in the businesses of forestry, agriculture and commercial property. Applying legislative direction, DNR exchanges or auctions properties outside these core businesses and replaces them with properties that advance trust goals. For example, trust lands are consolidated so that DNR manages whole landscapes instead of scattered parcels, thus reducing costs and enhancing broad public benefits like clean water, recreation, and wildlife habitat.

DNR is developing five potential land exchanges in eastern Washington to dispose of scattered parcels and facilitate each partner's land management goals. If these proposals move forward as envisioned, more than 237,000 acres could change ownership in 29 counties. The largest proposed exchange, with the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, would consolidate ownerships, enhance forest health, and protect critical wildlife habitat and migration routes in the eastern Cascade foothills and shrub-steppe landscapes. Central Cascades, the second largest, encompasses about 119,000 acres and would reduce the scattered, "checkerboard" ownership pattern in Kittitas and Yakima counties.

2006 PERFORMANCE MEASURE

- **Encouraged and coordinated the work of volunteers, whose contribution of time to the maintenance of DNR's 143 recreation sites was valued at $420,000.**

WENDY BROWN / DNR

SPARTINA CONTROL IN WILLAPA BAY

At its peak in 2003, the spartina invasion in Willapa Bay covered about 8,500 acres. Following the 2006 season, DNR expects about 1,500 acres of the weed to remain.

Eradication of spartina in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor is a long-term project involving close collaboration between DNR, Washington State Departments of Agriculture and Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and others. Using chemical, mechanical, and biological control methods, each agency has taken on a different region of the Bay. This year, for the first time, the agencies were able to treat the entire infestation

Shorebirds have come back to areas of the Bay once covered by thick spartina meadows. DNR is planning to lease formerly-infested areas for shellfish production.

Advancing Conservation Efforts

AQUATICS HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

DNR is preparing a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for state-owned aquatic lands to help reduce the risk of species extinction and contribute to the recovery of species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. Work began in 2004 with a formal review of DNR's management of state aquatic lands. DNR conducted scientific research to determine which species and habitats require protection, and identify the impact human use of aquatic lands has on those species. Among the uses likely to be covered by the HCP are aquaculture, over-water structures such as docks, public access, and log booming and storage.

Among the species under consideration for inclusion in the aquatic HCP are the Columbia spotted frog, bald eagle, Chinook salmon, and killer whale. DNR also has identified conservation measures and estimated the benefits these would have for species and habitats. This work is now undergoing scientific peer review.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) meetings were held in the fall to solicit public comment and further define the scope of the HCP environmental impact statement. A final draft will appear in 2007, and DNR will seek adoption and implementation in 2009.

▼ **Columbia Spotted Frog**
(*Rana luteiventris)* Found primarily in the wetlands of eastern Washington, the Columbia Spotted Frog's range has declined over the last 50 years, largely due to loss of habitat.

RONN ALTIG © CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

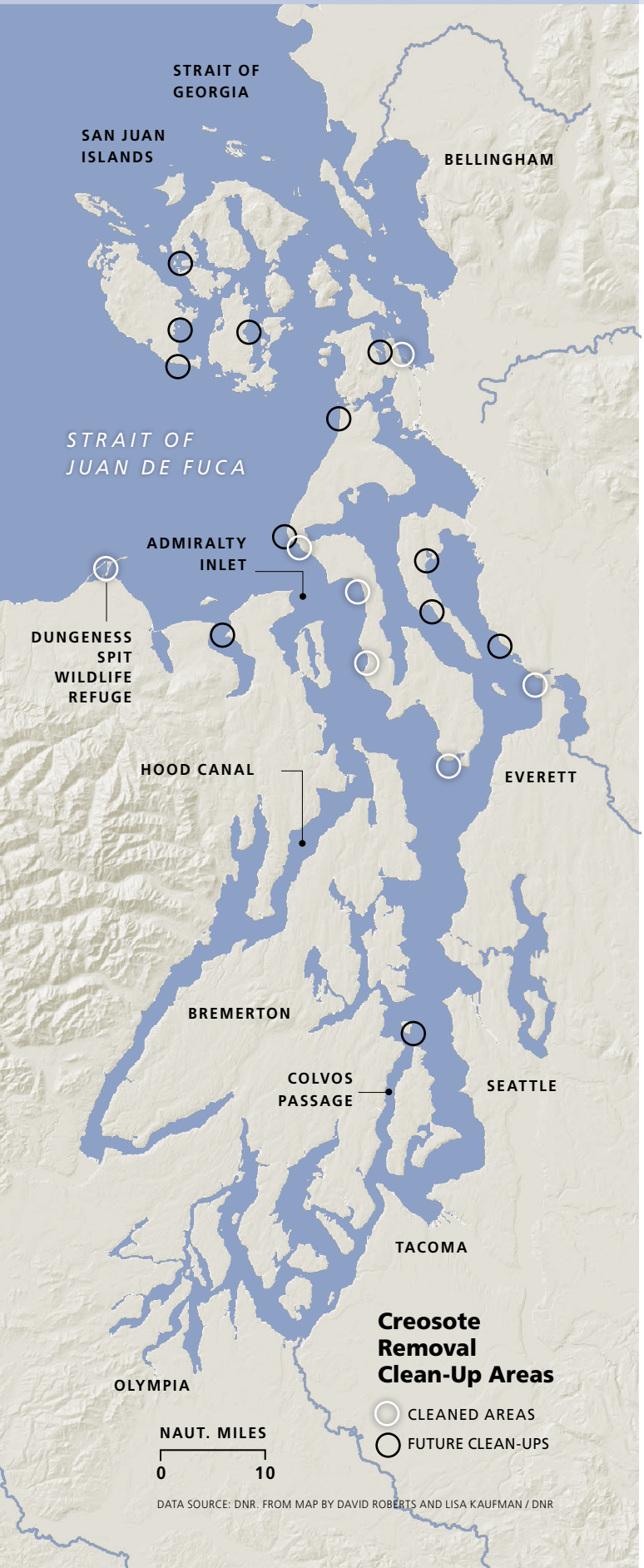
KOPACHUCK BEACH RESTORATION

An important part of DNR's stewardship is the role of the Aquatic Lands Program in restoring and protecting aquatic environments. In October, the Program partnered with Washington State Parks to complete a beach restoration project

Restoration of the Kopachuck State Park shoreline will benefit many species, including juvenile and migrating adult salmon.

at Kopachuck State Park near Gig Harbor. Here, an old 200-foot long bulkhead built of creosote-treated timbers was in danger of breaking away and washing into Puget Sound. The bulkhead was removed, along with concrete slabs, a stairwell, and pilings. In all, the project cleared 18-tons of creosoted wood and about 15 cubic yards of concrete. With this artificial shoreline armoring removed, the natural processes that transport sediment will improve. Restoration of the shoreline will benefit many species, including juvenile and migrating adult salmon.

Restoration projects like this are possible thanks to collaboration with local communities and public agencies, as well as support from capital funds dedicated to restoration of state aquatic lands.



Removing Hazards

CREOSOTE REMOVAL

DNR has been participating in the removal of creosote from Puget Sound beaches since 2004, and the governor's Puget Sound Initiative is now contributing an additional $2 million to these efforts. Long used as a wood preservative, creosote is carcinogenic and toxic. Not only does it contaminate the food chain, it also endangers the health of children who play on beach logs and people who burn beach wood. DNR helped remove nearly 550 tons of creosote-treated debris in 2006. A high point in this ongoing effort was the removal of 268 tons from the Dungeness Spit Wildlife Refuge. DNR staff worked with 27 Washington Conservation Corps workers, wildlife refuge staff, and volunteers to identify and prepare contaminated logs for removal by helicopter. Successful projects like this are the result of collaboration with the Washington Department of Ecology, Northwest Straits Commission, and a host of other government agencies and private organizations.

2006 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- **Treated 1,225 acres of state-owned aquatic lands to eliminate invasive spartina grass. This is 825 acres above the target set for 2006.**
- **Ensured that over 10% of water-dependent aquatic leases renewed in fiscal year 2006 included a provision to provide public access.**

DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL PROGRAM

DNR's Derelict Vessel Removal Program is a mechanism for dealing with derelict or abandoned vessels, which contain toxic materials and are hazardous to shipping. DNR removed six vessels in fiscal year 2006, secured three that were too expensive to remove, and is in the custody process for four others. Removals are often coordinated with the US Coast Guard and state Department of Ecology during emergency responses to sinking vessels.

SARAH DZINBAL / DNR

The program also provides funding and expertise to help other public entities remove and dispose of vessels. Since 2003, it has facilitated the removal of more than 200 vessels: about a quarter were removed by DNR, half by other public entities, and the rest by their owners. The 2006 Legislature improved derelict vessel statutes based on DNR's recommendations, making it a misdemeanor to abandon a boat or cause it to become derelict, and allowing vessel owners to request a hearing to challenge a custody decision instead of having to file a lawsuit.